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ABSTRACT

The mandate to foster social intelligence through public education is the historic basis for the federally funded programs resulting from the 1965 Elementary Secondary Education Act. Art as an instrument of social change also was the goal of a 1970 summer program initiated by the Guggenheim Museum for New York's inner city youth. Under the direction of art and reading teacher, Bernadette O'Brien, funding for this program was sought through Title I funds. This required a refocusing of the program toward learning to read through the arts. The design of Learning to Read Through the Arts Program (LTRTA) featured a mechanism to measure the effect of the LTRTA experience on children through standarized tests. Results of the tests provided evidence of the Program's success in raising reading achievement. Generous time allotment given to staff development also was a design feature that contributed to program success. The methodologies of the program were adaptable to museum and non-museum association, which allowed for other educational organizations to develop successful programs based on the LTRTA model. This document incorporates biographic information about Bernadette O'Brien. An addendum includes: (1) a 1965 newspaper reprint concerning the signing of the aid-to-education bill by President Lyndon B. Johnson; (2) a chart showing pre- and post-test results of LTRTA pupil progress; and (3) a 1982 article by Bernadette C. O'Brien that describes her methodologies. Contains 19 references. (MM)

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ED 378 103

LEARNING TO READ THROUGH THE ARTS

Its Emergence in Context

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M.Z.

PROLOGUE

Making art, what Eliot Eisner called "the act of arting"[1], is a form of communication. It is similar to other acts of communication, like writing and speaking, in that it involves externalizing human thought through a language. Soren Korup gives precision to the word "language" as it will be used in this paper. "Language" combines two French words and incorporates both their meanings. What the French call "langue" means a code, a set of syntactic rules. "Langage" is a medium, a means of communication in a more general sense.[2] To perceive communication the ability to see or hear is necessary, but to understand that communication, a person must be able to decipher its code. He must become a reader. Consistent with the comprehensive definition of the word "language", I will use the word "reading" as defined by Eisner: "a generic process of decoding the expressive forms created by man so that the meanings within these forms can be recovered"[3]. Eisner goes on to state that expressive forms are not limited to words or numbers. This broad concept of communication has been operative in other

cultures in history. For example, in this hemisphere, drawing, sculpting and writing coexisted in a completely integrated language system among the Mayan people in pre-Columbian Central America.

In the United States, the place for the arts as an expressive form has not been in its educational institutions. Art activity has not traditionally been regarded as a cognitive pursuit."The arts were primarily a realm of emotion, mystery, magic or intuition. Cognition was associated with science and problem-solving."[4] Since 1965, however, programs integrating the arts into these previously isolated cognitive areas have proliferated.

How did this national transformation occur, and more specifically, what were the factors that brought about the emergence of the program called Learning to Read Through the Arts? And finally, what was so unique about this program, as it was conceived by its founder Bernadette C. O'Brien, that it has endured for more than twenty-two years? These are the questions I intend to answer here.

LEARNING TO READ THROUGH THE ARTS

Its Emergence in Context

In this country, the dominance of Western culture followed European settlement. The function of the arts had been split during the Renaissance; Europeans separated fine arts from other art products they judged to be more serious and useful. The sheer difficulty of Colonial life and the power of the Puritan ethos insured the primacy of utility in all things. When the Puritans organized the first public school system in the mid 1600's it was for the specific purpose of teaching children to read the Scriptures. They were concerned with saving souls; art was not in the Puritan curriculum.

Horace Mann was among the first American educators to recognize the potential of art in the schools. As first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education in the 1850's, Mann saw many applications for the manual skill that could be achieved through drawing, as well as the way art activities could make schools less distasteful to students. On a trip to Europe to assess various programs of instruction, he saw the wide use of drawing lessons

in Prussia designed by an art teacher, Peter Schmidt. "Those exercises, if introduced into our schools will rescue children from disgust at the school; from aversion to the teacher, where otherwise that most unfortunate relation might arise; from habits of mischief; from the depraving effects of disobedience; and from an apprenticeship to dullness. In addition to all this, it will confer upon every child the rudiments of a most valuable art- a source of both pleasure and profit in later life"[5]. So impressed was Horace Mann with Schmidt's drawing lessons that, as editor of the Common School Journal, he published them, seeking their use throughout the state.

For Horace Mann the art experience was a means of capturing the students who would not otherwise be receptive to the benefits of education. Mann's devotion to the democratic ethic required common schooling with universal participation. His was a paternalistic ideal. He believed that educating the working class would have a civilizing effect on a group that would not otherwise appreciate the freedoms they had inherited as Americans. "We are created," said Mann, "and brought into life with a set of innate, organic dispositions or propensities, which a free government rouses and invigorates, and which, if not bridled and tamed by our actually seeing the eternal laws of justice, as plainly as we can see the sun in the heavens- and by actually feeling the sovereign sentiment of duty, as plainly as we feel the earth beneath our feet,-will

hurry us forward into regions populous with every form of evil"[6]. That public schools should foster the growth of a social intelligence, and that art teaching could contribute to that end, was an idea that legitimized art activity within the school curriculum. It was an idea that, one hundred years later, would become the philosophical underpinning of some Federally funded programs, among them, Learning to Read Through the Arts.

But the expressive, communicative aspects of the arts had not yet found a place in the American education system. The traditional split between fine and applied art continued. The former was relegated to the suspicious realm of emotion, while the latter was only acceptable in the classroom as a technical skill or craft. What art activities there were were taught independent of other content areas, isolated as all subjects were from each other. It took a unique convergence of factors to arrive at the conditions in which the arts and language could merge.

By the turn of the century, Charles Darwin's work in biology was beginning to have a profound effect on the practice of education. "The child came to be viewed not as an object to be stuffed with information or skills but as a person with wants and needs"[7]. This more child-centered view reached educators primarily through the writings of John Dewey, whose thirty-four books and seven-hundred articles were widely read. In 1913, Sigmund Freud's Interpretation of Dreams was translated into English and

the popularization of his thinking led educators to see the therapeutic value of self-expression in children. Other European influences were felt in art from the modernist movement. The departure from realism toward impressionism, cubism and expressionism opened questions as to how art could look. The practice of art education was not quick to adapt to these new visual conceptions, but they added to the momentum that was building toward greater personal expression in the arts curriculum.

The Progressive movement in education led by the Progressive Education Association, founded in 1919, was responsive to the pedagogical implications of these liberal ideas. Through the 1920's and 1930's, the child's imagination became a more appropriate domain for exploration in the classroom, as did the nonverbal communication of the arts. Educators were beginning to recognize that integration or correlation of art with other formerly isolated subjects would make the learning experience more meaningful to the child.

In the 1930's, until the period following World War II, the theme of utilizing art as a means of developing the human potential in the child was repeated and amplified by Victor Lowenfeld. He was Chairman of the Graduate School of Art Education at Pennsylvania State University, the most influential graduate program in its field. Lowenfeld's Creative and Mental Growth became a classic in the literature of art education. The first edition appeared

in 1947. W. Lambert Brittain, who co-authored subsequent editions said, "Victor Lowenfeld had a tremendous impact upon education, and to a great extent it is because of him that art education has become recognized as an important part of the curriculum in the public schools." Brittain attributed Lowenfeld's influence to "his concern and involvement with children, their interests, their growth, and most of all with themselves as children"[8].

A restatement of Horace Mann's theme of social consciousness from the perspective of an art educator was sounded by Herbert Read, a scholarly philosopher from England. In his 1943 Education Through Art, Read posited the importance of the arts in creating a more harmonious social order. He considered "arting" to be a general process through which an individual might find equilibrium between his internal life and his external life as a member of society.

The desire to achieve social harmony took on an urgency as the pace of growth in the school population accelerated dramatically following World War II. Educators, already burdened with overcrowded facilities, were additionally challenged by the Supreme Court's decisions of 1954 and 1955 mandating desegregation of schools. In 1957 the Soviet Union launched its Sputnik, calling attention to the weaknesses of the nation's educational system. The civil rights movement inspired a new activism in students of college age. The campus became the place

where opposing sides of political and educational issues met in conflict. The attention focused on these issues created a climate conducive to educational innovation at all levels.

Only four months after the student sit-ins at the University of California at Berkley, President Johnson signed a $1.3 billion aid-to-education bill on April 11, 1965 saying, "As President, I believe deeply that no law I have signed or have ever signed means more to the future of our nation"[9]. Amounts alloted to states were determined by the average annual current expenditure per school child in each of the states, and the number of school-age children in school districts from families with annual earned incomes of less than $2000.[10] Of the Title I projects spawned nationally by The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, more than eighty per cent were concerned with reading and related activities. Of the Federal money that was pouring into Title I programs, the arts did not directly receive additional funding. They were deemed irrelevant to the promotion of academic success. In the urgency to bring American children out of the grip of poverty and to bind together a social fabric that appeared to be tearing apart, educators did not initially make the connection with art in the rush to remediate.

In the same year as Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Bernadette C. O'Brien was working in P.S.125 in New York City's Harlem.

In telephone conversations taped on March 9 and March 23, 1994, O'Brien patiently detailed her experiences as a new teacher, and other factors that contributed to her conception of an integrated art and reading program.

At P.S. 125, Bernadette O'Brien was a reading teacher, part of a team which coordinated its efforts to improve academic skills in the Junior Guidance Classes. She held a B.A. in Art from Hunter College and was earning credits toward a M.A. in Reading Specialization, conferred in 1969. In her courses, O'Brien was becoming familiar with the literature of both fields, and was inclined to create bridges between the two. This can be seen in the authors she named as having been especially influential: John Dewey, Rhoda Kellogg, Victor Lowenfeld, Nila Banton Smith and E. Paul Torrance. Between 1963 and 1969, O'Brien worked as either a reading or art teacher. She was experimenting, seeking ways to find connections between art and reading activities; she used drawing to give reading students something to think, write and talk about, and in the art room she was developing art-related vocabulary to enable students to speak about what they were doing. With all the informality of impromptu conversation, O'Brien told of these early experiments:

> As a reading teacher, I was starting to say there should be language experience. I was heading toward an integrated type of learning, for the whole child,

with themes and units of work... As an art teacher, I was looking at the children's stages of development... I was looking at Rhoda Kellogg, at universality and stereotypes in children's art in all different parts of the world... And then I'm in the art room and the child can't answer me in a complete sentence...he doesn't make a thought...How do I help him? I start using the vocabulary, maybe talking about an artist or about a picture, or suggesting we go on a field trip...so it was a little about a lot of things in those years, when I was starting to make connections, relationships.

Also during those years, Bernadette O'Brien was helping one of her five children, a young son who was deaf, to reinforce at home the lessons he was learning at the New York League for the Hard of Hearing.

In his classes they were using things like word association...feeling and touching objects in order to gain vocabulary, words in context... Like a car...you move the car around, you manipulate it. You talk about the car, where the car is going...You kept giving the language to the child. Some of those things I was seeing. And then I got this notion of teaching through the five senses, through the modalities, because that was the technique they were using... So I was forming during those years a

10

philosophy, a methodology in how to get kids to learn.

It was from the synthesis of those experiences as teacher, student, and mother that O'Brien formulated the concepts that would distinguish the 1971 program called Learning to Read Through the Arts. She believed that activities which involved the senses were intrinsically meaningful to children, and for that reason, children were more apt to find success in doing them. Once captivated this way, children posessed a motivating concrete experience. This would become the bridge to more abstract forms of expression, to speaking, writing, and reading.

An article published in January 1968 described an experimental program at Hunter College. The program's objective was to prepare teachers to cope with the difficulties of teaching disadvantaged children. The authors identified the chief problems as classroom control and the teaching of reading. Citing research done by Riesman and others on the learning style of these children, the authors quoted the report as saying that the learning style of the disadvantaged child "is physical and visual rather than aural"[11]. The authors described an apprcach strikingly similar to O'Brien's. It used art and music experiences as a means to increase the child's involvement in reading. "The methods and materials being developed to teach reading emphasize motivation, multi-sensory involvement and success"[12]. The objective of Hunter's Education Department

was to reduce the alarming dropout rate for new teachers working with the disadvantaged. Concurrently, independently, Bernadette O'Brien was developing a personal strategy for her own disadvantaged students, based on her ten years of teaching.

For O'Brien, the art activity was the central element that could join the affective and cognitive domains. The passion of her belief was palpable as she expanded on this concept:

> If the children could learn in these two areas, they could learn anything. That was my base. If they could make art, and make it central in their lives, it would reflect the whole human condition...I felt the arts were crucial- that every child should have that experience. They could explore, create, think...Not only the talented kids- all kids. They could enjoy, use their leisure time...I felt the arts were magic- they turned you on to life. You didn't need a lot of money for toys or anything like that...you could always have something to do. And I elaborated on those ideas as we talked about different artists, and went to museums and that kind of thing. But the base was that the arts were unique- they did something for people that no other area did quite like that. And the other piece was reading. If you could get children to read and they were proficient, they could read any book. They could take

12

any course that interested them...So I felt if you could get children to experience both art and reading, and the reading being cognitive, although we know today that the arts are cognitive too, they could face the world...and they could have a good life.

The burning national question was how to bring children of poverty into the mainstream of society; the nation's response would test the maturity of our democracy. Bernadette O'Brien was at work in her Harlem school as intense deliberations were underway in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The Brooklyn Museum sponsored what was called "A Seminar on the Role of the Arts in Meeting the Social and Educational Needs of the Disadvantaged". In 1966, for five days in November, thirty-four individuals gathered under the aegis of the Arts and Humanities Program of the U.S. Office of Education to pool information and ideas, and to plan for dissemination of their findings. Katherin Bloom, at the time Director of the Arts and Humanities Program, reported in part, that "little had been done to investigate the nonverbal aspects of communication in the arts as portentous avenues to later verbal learnings and reading behavior of young children"[13].

Eliot Eisner, then at Stanford University, brought the issues raised by Bloom into sharper focus. Eisner first defined aesthetic behavior and the nature of middle-class as compared to lower-class cognitive development. Then

13

he delineated three benefits which education in the arts might give to poor children: 1)"...it appears that instruction in the arts which aims at the development of perceptual skills might contribute to the development of the complex and subtle view of reality that culturally disadvantaged children fail to acquire"; 2)"...provide for preverbal expression since they reflect and give form to those ineffable images and feelings through which a child with limited verbal skills can find release"; and 3)"...provide a vehicle for value-change for those culturally disadvantaged youth who are also socially alienated and who need desperately to reconstruct the image they hold of themselves and others."[14]

Horace Mann's belief in the power of the arts to ameliorate social ills had reached the highest levels of government. A speech given in California on May 3, 1969, echoed his sentiments. Robert M. Finch, then Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare said: "...the arts have become potent keys for unlocking the capacities of the poor and the disadvantaged. There is remarkable evidence that involving children in creative work can provide ghetto schools with a new and successful approach to education. Appealing directly to their creative impulses can apparently open some children up and can break them out of a tiny, compartmentalized, closed world, to a point where they are ready to benefit from instruction in the three R's."[15]

In the developments that led to the birth of Learning

to Read Through the Arts, it is significant that the sponsor of the 1966 seminar in Gaithersburg was the Brooklyn Museum. Standing in the midst of an area in downward transition, this venerable institution actively sought to make art an instrument for social change . Public pressure was building, moving other New York art museums to make their own gestures of social relevance. The Solomom R. Guggenheim Museum, near the southern boundary of Spanish Harlem sought to organize an outreach program for children as the summer of 1970 approached. Bernadette O'Brien was called. She was then Arts Coordinator of District Two, in which the museum is located. O'Brien described how those first workshops for children, held at the Guggenheim, developed into the program known today as Learning to Read Through the Arts:

> The Guggenheim Museum was interested in having an education program for inner city kids; they had not tried any such program. There was a Board of Education staff member assigned to the museum who arranged field trips to the museum for school children, but there were no programs per se that were sponsored by the museum. Cultural instutions had gotten a lot of criticism that they were elitist, that they weren't serving the changing population of the city. Not only were they having problems with the people of El Barrio, but they were also getting criticism that young artists couldn't show their work. There were very few opportunities to exhibit or to make

15

a living. The museum decided to have a summer program for about sixty children to be called Learning Through the Arts. They were going to hire a few young people and they were going to make a connection with some of the schools nearby and have the children come to the museum. They asked me to send children to participate. They had very little knowledge of how to deal with school children. I viewed it as a great opportunity for these young children to have a chance to visit and work in a museum. I became deeply involved with the Guggenheim...they didn't even know how to get the kids there, you know...all those things you think automatically happen.

At the end of the summer, the Guggenheim decided to continue the program, and invited me to remain with it. They asked me to work with them and the Board of Education to see if we could get funding for a winter program. The Board said we might be able to get moneys through Title I...Now, Title I was for basic education, so we were trying to think how this could work out...and I thought we might write a program called Learning to <u>Read</u> Through the Arts, because I had a background in both reading and art...I felt this was the way learning naturally occurred because of my own work with children in both areas.

Learning Through the Arts had been primarily a studio arts project...When they wanted to write the

16

proposal for Title I, it needed a very definite focus, a very definite schedule, and a very definite evaluation design; you had to show how you were going to improve reading.

The program was funded in the summer of 1971 and I became Project Director. That was the first Learning to Read Through the Arts Program under Title I. It was called The Title I Children's Program Learning to Read Through the Arts. It continued as such with the Guggenheim Museum and the New York City Board of Education until 1975.

Learning to Read Through the Arts was launched. Looking back on the progression of events described in the preceding pages, it seems inevitable that such a program would have evolved. Indeed, that very summer in 1970, ten school districts across New York State developed their own summer projects that somehow used the arts to improve reading and other communication skills[16]. As of this writing, I have been unable to find evidence that any of these early experimental programs still exist. I believe it was the ingenious design of the Learning to Read Through the Arts (LTRTA) program, as it was conceived by Bernadette O'Brien that has allowed it to continue longer than any other arts-based reading program.

Uniquely, O'Brien's design featured a mechanism to reliably measure the effect of the LTRTA experience on

children through standardized reading tests. The strongest single argument for the sustained interest in, and the continued funding for LTRTA was its irrefutable record of success in raising reading scores[17]. Participating children who were reading from two to five years below grade level exceeded or equaled the amount of growth expected of children who are regarded as successful readers[18]. A steady accumulation of hard data continued to document student achievement. In 1974 the National Right to Read Office, through a contract with The American Institute for Research, undertook a nationwide search to identify and validate reading programs. As a result of this analysis and further review by the Dissemination Review Panel of the U.S. Office of Education, Learning to Read Through the Arts was designated as one of twelve exemplary programs endorsed as effective by the U.S. Office of Education.

The stress on demonstrable results was augmented by a self-critical, experimental attitude. This was built into the program's design by a generous allotment of time given to staff development. The reading teachers and artist teachers, along with the Project Director met regularly for inservice training. Topics covered during these joint sessions included interpretation of standardized tests and diagnostic inventories, developmental breakdown of reading skills, improvement of reading skills and sharing and developing of art and reading activities. Visiting

experts in the fields of education and psychology were often invited to speak at these meetings, keeping the staff abreast of current trends.

The success of Bernadette O'Brien's pilot program with the Guggenheim Museum began to attract interest among other art educators in New York City. In 1973, Cecile Davis, Art Supervisor of District Six in Washington Heights, invited O'Brien to design a program based on the LTRTA model, using the collection of the Cloisters Museum as its content. This was to be called The Cloisters Learning Through the Arts Program. Two years later, Sylvia Corwin, Assistant Principal in Charge of Art, John F. Kennedy High School in the Bronx, issued a new challenge to Bernadette O'Brien. Corwin asked her to design a program in which "conventionally trained teachers of Fine Arts, within the structure of a typical secondary school organization, would provide opportunities to improve reading for previously unsuccessful adolescents"[19]. By September 1975, nine high schools each had a class participating in Improving Visual Perception Skills in Art Classes in High Schools. This program was known as Reading Improvement Through the Arts (R.I.T.A.). Dr. Eric Mortensen, Office of Educational Evaluation, wrote that in each semester of the R.I.T.A. program, "The growth grades, based on reading scores of participating students, were not only significantly beyond statistical expectations, they were beyond growth normally expected in a full year's program"[20].

19

These first two replications of LTRTA proved that its methodology was eminently adaptable. It could operate effectively with or without a museum association. It could produce impressive results with older students, who had a longer record of academic failure. There was a sense of discovery within the educational community, especially among art educators. It can be felt in Sylvia Corwin's vivid account of the 1976 NAEA convention. "In April, I went to St. Louis to attend the National Art Education Association convention with Bernadette O'Brien, Education Director of Learning to Read Through the Arts and Robert Reals of the Bureau of Art Education, New York State Department of Education. We had been invited to report on an exciting development in New York City. Our colleagues in art education, from every part of the country and from every level, kindergarten through college, were as eager to learn about the relationships between visual arts and reading as we were to share news of our achievements. Art teachers and administrators packed the reporting sessions; the discussions that followed were proof of the widespread, genuine interest in this interdisciplinary approach"[21].

The article in which this quotation appeared also gave a detailed description of the pilot R.I.T.A. project. It was published in the January, 1977 edition of School Arts magazine. The response from art educators, as reported the following year by Corwin, indicates a building momentum to combine the teaching of art and reading. "One hundred

and fifty requests for information poured in from teachers, administrators and school systems across the United States, including Alaska. Faculty and students from twenty-seven colleges, staffs of fifteen arts-related organizations (museums, libraries, a Navajo reservation, a prison), and educators in Canada, Australia and South Africa wrote for the curriculum, too. The correspondence followed a pattern: 'In my experience in elementary, secondary, college or graduate school, I see a natural reciprocity, connection, and interdependence between visual art instruction and reading. I am pleased that others find this too'"[22].

It required a social crisis to make the need for new pedagogical strategies urgently apparent. It required a responsive government to underwrite experiments in education. It required a consensus among educators that perception and reasoning could coexist to allow the integration of visual arts with reading. Finally, there had to be educators prepared to seize the opportunity offered by these circumstances. Bernadette C. O'Brien was prepared. She possessed a fortuitous balance of professional credentials, and a tenacious drive toward demonstrable excellence. These attributes were informed by an instinct to recognize and promote what was essential to learning in children. It was this perfect synchrony of person and opportunity that brought about the emergence of Learning to Read Through the Arts.

EPILOGUE

Today, there are eight developer/demonstrator sites of the LTRTA program in four boroughs of New Ycrk City where reading teachers are teamed with artist teachers. Adoption sites exist in both rural and urban areas in twenty-one states across the country. Training sessions are conducted in which classroom teachers, reading or art teachers learn to apply LTRTA methods to the circumstances of their particular schools.

Bernadette O'Brien herself, through her positions as Professional Staff Developer for the Louisiana State Education Department, and in her teaching at East Stroudsburg University, Pennsylvania; The Maryland Institute, College of Art; Bank Street College of Education, New York; and at Hunter College of the City University of New York insures the continued renewal of Learning to Read Through the Arts in a new generation of educators.

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ADDENDUM

PRESIDENT SIGNS EDUCATION BILL AT HIS OLD SCHOOL

Hails $1.3 Billion Aid Plan —First Teacher Attends Ceremony in Texas

By CHARLES MOHR
Special to The New York Times

JOHNSON CITY, Tex., April 11—President Johnson signed today the $1.3 billion aid-to-education bill at the old country school where he had his first lesson.

"As President," said Mr. Johnson, "I believe deeply that no law I have signed or will ever sign means more to the future of our nation."

At Mr. Johnson's elbow during the ceremony was his first schoolteacher, Mrs. Kate Deadrich Loney, who is now 72 years old. The former Junction rural elementary school is a mile and a half east of the LBJ Ranch house. It has been converted into a farm home owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bert Alford of Oklahoma. It is not occupied.

Mr. Johnson sat at a rude wooden bench outside the building, which is covered in ancient galvanized metal siding meant to resemble cut stone. Flanking him were old wooden school desks and chairs, some of which had been in use when he attended the school.

The President, who has sometimes used more than 100 pens to sign a bill, used just one and handed it to Mrs. Loney. She seemed not to realize that it was meant as a souvenir for her and left it on the table as she walked away.

Students Are Guests

Mr. Johnson recalled that he first began to go to the school at the age of 4 when his mother would ask the teacher to mind him while she worked at housecleaning.

"They tell me, Miss Kate, that I recited my first lessons while sitting on your lap," he said. He attended the school for three years.

Mr. Johnson also recalled that he had been a teacher himself. He invited as guests to the ceremony some of the Mexican-American students he taught at Cotulla, Tex., in the late 1920's.

About seven of his former students visited him at his ranch house and came to the ceremony with him. Also on hand were several students he had taught at San Marcos State Teachers College in the 1920's. He shook their hands warmly, and smiled as one man shouted "speech class" at him as a reminder.

Also on hand were Senator Eugene J. McCarthy, Democrat of Minnesota, and the House majority leader, Carl Albert of Oklahoma, who were spending the night with Mr. Johnson.

The education bill passed the Senate Friday. It provides for $1.06 billion in aid to public schools under a formula designed to channel the aid to school districts serving needy children.

Under the formula the Federal Government will pay an annual grant equal to half the cost borne by the state in educating each child from a family with an income of $2,000 a year or less. There are about five million such children and almost every school district will receive some aid.

In addition the bill provides $100 million to purchase textbooks and library materials for both public and parochial school children and $100 million for community education centers that will provide "shared-time" educational facilities for both public and private school students.

It is the first time Federal funds have been authorized to indirectly assist private, church schools. And it is the first major, general aid to elementary education to get through Congress, where there has been acrimonious disagreement on the church-state issue.

Mr. Johnson said he had chosen the time and place of the signing ceremony because "I do not wish to delay by a single day the program to strengthen this nation's elementary and secondary schools."

He said he "devoutly" wished his sense of urgency would be matched by those officials responsible for carrying out the aid program.

"Second," said Mr. Johnson, "I felt a strong desire to go back to the beginning of my own education—to be reminded and to remind others of that magic time when the world of learning was beginning to open before our eyes."

The President deplored the fact that the controversy over whether parochial schools should share in aid had blocked Federal aid to any schools.

"For too long children suffered," he said. "While jarring interests caused stalemate in efforts to improve our schools."

"I predict that all of those of both parties of Congress who supported the enactment of this legislation will be remembered in history as men and women who began a new day of greatness in American society," he said.

Mr. Johnson added that "by this act we bridge the gap between helplessness and hope for more than five million educationally deprived children."

He said he "devoutly" wished million new books into the hands of youth, "reduce the terrible time lag" in bringing newer teaching techniques to active classroom use and strengthen state and local education agencies.

This morning Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Loney and the President's sister, Mrs. Birge Alexander, attended Palm Sunday services at the First Methodist Church in Johnson City. Mrs. David Brinkley, wife of the National Broadcasting Company commentator, who flew to Texas as a guest of the Johnsons, was also in the party.

After church Mr. Johnson took the wheel of his white Lincoln sedan and led a motorcade of more than 40 vehicles on a tour of Johnson City and the surrounding countryside.

In Johnson City, the President and his party visited the home in which Mr. Johnson spent his boyhood.

A plume of dust hung in the sky as the President and the serpentine line of cars drove off a paved road and on a five-mile tour of dirt ranch roads.

Mr. Johnson will return to Washington tomorrow morning, arriving in time to throw out the first ball of the baseball season in the afternoon.

Associated Press Wirephoto

President Johnson gives the pen he used to sign the aid-to-education bill to Mrs. Kate Deadrich Loney, his first school teacher. The measure became a law yesterday.

April 12, 1965

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Learning to Read Through the Arts Program
New York City Board of Education
Developer/Demonstrator Project, National Diffusion Network
United States Department of Education

Evaluation Results

This increase, or Treatment Effect shows considerable students' improvement. Any Treatment Effect greater than zero NCE is considered evidence that students have benefited from their participation in a program. Achievement gains over seven (7) NCE have come to indicate outstanding pupil progress. The gains cited below validated the exemplary status of the program.

Grade	# of Students	Mean Pre-test * NCE	Mean Post-test * NCE	Treatment Effect * NCE
1978-1979				
3-6	879	26.47	44.88	18.41
1979-1980				
2-6	1,130	28.76	40.70	11.94
1980-1981				
2-6	840	27.0	40.0	13.0
1981-1982				
2-6	677	31.0	43.0	12.0
1982-1983				
3-6	677	31.0	43.0	12.0
1983-1984				
3-6	527	30.0	43.1	15.2
1984-1985				
2-6	649	29.0	42.9	13.9
1985-1986				
2-6	697	27.9	43.9	16.0

(*NCE = Normal Curve Equivalent)

1982

INTEGRATING ART AND READING - LEARNING TO READ THROUGH THE ARTS

Bernadette C. O'Brien

The Developer/Demonstrator Title I Children's Program: Learning to Read Through the Arts, New York City Board of Education addresses itself to children who are of an age when their ideas about art are not yet formulated and they are most receptive to creative inspiration. When given encouragement and opportunity, most children will express themselves creatively. The success and sense of achievement gained from completing a work of art can give the child confidence which can then be transferred and applied to other areas of learning.

The dominant theme of the program is the teaching of skills in reading through involvement in the arts--performing, plastic and film. The underlying theme is to build self-confidence, improve self-image, and add to the experiences of the participating child.

Integration of a Total Art Program and Total Reading Program

The nationally, state and city validated exemplary, Developer/Demonstrator, multi-district Title I Children's Program: Learning to Read Through the Arts, The Board of Education of the City of New York is an experiential program. It is an intensive, individualized, reading program that focuses on the improvement of reading skills through the integration of a total art program with a total reading program.

The child sees, hears, touches, smells, and/or tastes his products! Each of these learning experiences has been designed to help him to perceive, recall and reinforce what he is learning. The process is as important as the product.

Listening, speaking, writing and reading techniques are stressed in the reading-oriented arts workshops. A diagnostic, prescriptive approach to reading is stressed in the reading workshops. The staff includes reading teachers, artist teachers and classroom teachers working as a team.

An Illustration of the Methodology

Some of the skills learned in the art experience will be valuable to him in his reading, and vice versa. In order to succeed in this, however, a clear linkage must be made so that the learner will begin to correlate the many skills learned in the different disciplines. The Learning to Read Through the Arts methodology attempts to make this crucial linkage for each learner. For example, the teacher presents a work of art--a painting, in this case--to the child; together, they notice the details of the painting and use the spoken and written word to describe them. As the child works on his own painting, using various colors and shapes and designs, it becomes possible for him/her to use the words which describe his/her own work. He is helped to use this vocabulary in his reading and writing, too. As he becomes aware of the details which are developing his own painting, he now finds that the details may

also be described through language. He moves from the concrete (nonverbal) to the abstract (verbal) experience. It is a simple matter to convert this knowledge into written form, by presenting to the child, reading exercises in "grasping detail," for instance, which will now have become personally meaningful to him.

We have found that if children are able to read material and apply the information thus acquired to some practical purpose, the children are interested in what they are reading and they recall what they have read. Reading becomes a tool to learn more about the arts.

Art Teachers Implement the Methodology

The artist teachers are trained in the Learning to Read Through the Arts methodology. They build on the language the child already knows by using a Learning to Read Through the Arts language experience approach in their reading-oriented arts workshop. The Reading-Oriented Arts Workshops may include dance, music, theater, filmmaking, photography, puppetry, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking or world crafts. In a language experience approach the following procedures work well: the art teachers and pupils decide on an art project; the students verbalize about the experience with the teachers. As the students express themselves, the teacher elicits a few sentences that sum up what has been said. A short composition is written by the teacher in the master journal while the pupils watch. The instructor calls attention to details that are important to reading such as letter formation, association of sounds with symbols, repetition of the same sounds or symbols, the function of captialization and punctuation, phrasing and vocabulary development. The group composition serves as the basis for discussion in which letters and words are recognized.

Each student maintains a personal, individual journal. In it he copies the writing of the master journal as well as his statement of purpose for each art project, relevant technical information and writings that are inspired from the art books in the reading corner.

Re-reading of the entries in the teacher's master journal and in the student's log is scheduled. The purpose is to recall vocabulary and to reinforce comprehension.

Reading Proficiency Developed through Need to Use Special Skills

Within the context of creative activity, reading proficiency is developed through the Learning to Read Through the Arts language experience approach in the need for following directions, drawing inferences, thinking sequentially, and using specialized vocabulary. Class journals, logs, and diaries are kept in which information and directions acquired in the workshop and reactions to field trips are recorded on a regular basis. Children are involved creatively in applying reading skills through such activities as writing movie scripts and poetry, reading dramatic skits and writing autobiographies to accompany self-portraits. A great variety of literature about the arts, used also in the reading workshops, is read in depth in the arts workshops.

The art teacher, in collaboration with the reading teacher, determines, in advance, the vocabulary required for discussion and completion of each art project. These words are lettered and posted around the art room and referred to frequently.

The artist teacher may ask students to write the words in context, in the form of a definition, a story or an information account. Throughout the life of the art project these words are repeated . . . verbally and visually. The vocabulary may be specialized or normed to grade level. The instructor corrects the student journals and written materials for language and content.

The reading teachers use an individualized, prescriptive, remediation or enrichment approach. The students' reading weaknesses are diagnosed through the Wisconsin Design Skill Development Tests, the California Reading Achievement Test and informal testing.

Variety and Breadth of Input into Program

Most of the prescriptive materials are teacher-made because the content of the reading relates to the ongoing art projects rather than a standard, prepared reading text. Books, stencils, story boards, charts, filmstrips, tapes and recordings are some of the materials used in the multimedia center. The design also includes student participation in research, as children are encouraged to seek information about their art projects. These factors allow the youngsters to develop and build their interest and appreciation in the arts in reading. The specialized vocabulary and grade level vocabulary are exchanged by the arts and reading specialists, in order that each specialist will reinforce the learning in both the arts and reading workshops.

In addition to the arts and reading workshops, children go on regular field trips to cultural institutions and educational resource sites. Special events and/or performances are also brought to the program periodically. In this way the students have an opportunity to research a primary source such as an original painting, sculpture or manuscript, or they may see a professional theater performance, dance performance or hear a concert.

It has always been a commitment of the program to associate itself with major cultural institutions in the community where the program takes place, such as The Bronx Museum of the Arts, The New York Aquarium, The Queens Museum, The Staten Island Children's Museum and The Brooklyn Museum.

The students are also given the opportunity to showcase their own original works and accomplishments in the annual "Learning to Read Through the Arts Exhibition" and "The Performing Arts and Film Festival."

Last year the children's exhibition and performances were held at the School of Visual Arts Museum and the boroughwide Learning to Read Through the Arts Centers in the city.

Parents Play an Important Part in Program

Parents' workshops are an important part of the program in order that the parents may understand the program, learn how children learn, and have an opportunity to discuss family living. Also, the parents may serve as workshop or field trip assistants or become members of the program's Advisory Board. We found this aspect of the program most valuable to everyone involved in the project.

Pre-service and in-service training are necessary for both art and reading specialists and staff. An ongoing evaluation of the project is a major feature.

According to the evaluator, Paul Heintz of New York University, the Title I Children's Program: Learning to Read Through the Arts "provides a unique opportunity for organizing instruction that is based on current learning theory and research in education and psychology. Cognitive theorists posit that students learn most readily if exposed to knowledge, concepts or skill in sequence that proceeds from concrete to abstract. It is highly likely, therefore, that the success of the current program in enabling students who were previously unsuccessful in reading to make significant gains in reading is, in large part, due to the goodness of fit that has been achieved between the program activities and the way children are naturally set to learn."

Positive Results of an Examplary Program

Since 1971, the evaluations of past programs have shown that the students have improved an average of 1 to 2 months in reading for each month they have participated in the program as measured by standardized reading tests.

The Title I Children's Program: Learning to Read Through the Arts, The Board of Education of the City of New York received national recognition when the American Institute of Research for the National Right to Read Effort chose it as one of twelve exemplary reading programs in the United States. It was validated by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel of the United States Office of Education. The program was also selected by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as one of thirty-three exemplary Title I Programs in the nation. This Title I Learning to Read Through the Arts Children's Program is a Developer/Demonstrator project of the United States Office of Education, National Diffusion Network. In 1981 the program was selected by the Office of the Chancellor as one of the four exemplary programs for use in the promotional gates classes throughout the city. Commencing 1978-1979 the program has expanded to five sites in the boroughs of Manhattan, Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx in New York City. The program also services special education children. In the summer of 1981 the Division of Special Education used the Learning to Read Through the Arts program as its citywide Special Education Summer program located at twenty city sites.

There are replication programs of the Title I Children's Program: Learning to Read Through the Arts in both rural and urban areas in such states as Arizona, California, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas and Wyoming.